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Jane-Thompson-Stories

Just Seventeen: A Letter from the Void

A short-story by: *Paul Boardman*

A true story about a bitter relationship breakdown between two teenagers from England back in 1984. And then, 41 years later, a letter posted by Jane to Paul in 1984 finally arrives. Finally shows up. Forty-one years too late.

You are about to read his reply:

Dear Jane,

Hope this letter finds you well and in good health.

Can I recommend that you find somewhere private and alone to read this letter, Jane. It is extremely personal and private. I do not wish to cause either of us any trouble. I had enough of that 41 years ago.

Yes, it is me, Paul. Your ex-boyfriend and lover from many years ago now.

I have to say first that it almost defies belief that after 41 years, I am writing this letter to you. I am doing so because something quite unbelievable recently happened. I can hardly believe it myself. Many months ago, I received a letter from you dated 1984. That was 41 years ago almost to the day. I am still in shock, to say the least. I hear of things like this happening to other people, but rarely does anything like this happen to me. So, over the past several months, I have been puzzling over whether I should or could respond. Respond I shall.

When you posted the letter back in 1984, you posted it to the correct address — the old house on Broadway where you had been to see me many times. However, the letter you posted came through the letterbox

into an empty house, as we had all moved out to a new property not too far away in Hatfield several months earlier. I am told the old house was empty for about three months before a new couple moved in. At that point, there was a stack of letters on the floor that never got redirected to us. One letter for me was from you.

Anyway, the new owners were not local and did not know anyone in the area, but they found someone who knew me who lived just a few hundred yards away and gave them my letters, with the intention that they would eventually bump into me and pass them on. This never happened though, and they did not know where we had moved to. It's a long story. Suffice to say, they kept my mail on trust and safeguarded it until they saw me. But with me going to college and then university, and then elsewhere after that, they simply did not see me — ever. They eventually moved house themselves, which did not help, but they kept my mail in a drawer for me in the hope they would one day see me.

To cut a long story short, they eventually bumped into me just after the Covid lockdown ended, as I was back in Doncaster — a place I have rarely lived prior to Covid. I mostly work all over the UK for social work agencies as a Care Manager, either for the NHS or local authorities.

I now have your letter. I can hardly believe it though. Maybe divine intervention, as it seems too much to be a coincidence? I really do not know.

The letter you sent me was a real shock when I opened it. I had to sit down and read it three times to come to terms with it. In your letter you are asking me to meet you this Saturday, on the seats opposite the Armthorpe bus stop in town, at 12 o'clock. Saying "come alone," which sounded very ominous to me when reading it. The letter was short and to the point and signed by Lisa. But it was obviously from you, as Lisa would never write to me. You were probably sat next to her dictating. The postage stamp confirms 1984. Receiving this letter was like being hit by a freight train from back in the day. It really has opened a Pandora's box for me. However, receiving the letter now gives me the opportunity to say something that I simply could not say to you 41 years ago — and finally give you some closure. That is the only reason why I am replying.

I have thought about it for ages now, Jane, before writing back to you. And even if I had received your letter in time back in 1984, I still would not have been able to meet you as you would have liked. I had no choice but to leave you, Jane. Walking away from you was the only option you had left me with. I had heard at the time that you were bitter and angry with me for completely disappearing from sight. No goodbye, no see you later, and no closure for you. Just gone. I simply walked away. And never came back.

The reason for the above, Jane, was that I had spent several weeks trying to understand if I could save our relationship, but things were so bad, so toxic, that all the answers to all the questions were no. We could not go on. I had never been so badly hurt by anyone in my life as you had hurt

me — particularly in the last few months of our relationship. You started to treat me as though you did not care about me anymore. Viewing me as just an option. Taking me for granted. And seeing me as somebody who, regardless of what harm you did to me, would never leave you; would always stay in place for you to come back to me; despite how many times you were unfaithful to me.

This was a monumental miscalculation on your part, Jane. If you thought you could just abuse me any time you wanted, take me for granted, and sleep with whoever you liked, and then just come back to me, then you were wrong. I will explain in detail below, but this is why I walked away and never came back.

Back then, when we were dating, and for a while both completely in love with one another, I was always a decent person; somewhat naïve though, inexperienced, with a lot of growing up to do. But very much in love with you. You were my world in many ways. You meant everything to me, but you treated me with such disrespect, disdain, and at times it bordered on sheer malevolence. As if you simply did not want me around anymore, and did not care how badly hurt I was, or even if I was still alive. It really did get that bad. You kept telling me you loved me, but I could find little or no evidence to back it up. In many respects, you had made the decision for me to leave. You had made it much easier for me to metaphorically pack my bags and disappear into the night. Gone. I could not believe how easy it actually was. Yes, there was still pain; but I found out that pain is the price of freedom.

What happened next you still do not know anything about. To this day you are absolutely clueless and unaware.

So, I arranged to meet you one last time, Jane. I could not tell you what was about to happen on that last day together. We would just have argued and gone home upset again. So, I did not tell you. I kept quiet at the Boating Lake at Kirk Sandall. We actually had a great day in the park. It was a really fun day out. So sunny. And we did not argue once. It was great. But it had all been arranged by me knowing I would never see you again to talk to. That day was our last day together, and you still do not know anything about it.

I could not tell you that I was leaving you as I stood at the bus stop waiting for your bus to take you home, back to Doncaster. I always remember your face as I kissed you for the last time. You had no idea what was about to happen — in fact, what had already happened. I remember it differently to you because I knew I would never be with you again. That is why I remember it in high-definition colour, just like it happened yesterday. I remember crying all the way home. I was in a real mess, to say the least. So upset.

Just a few weeks before I made the decision to walk away and never come back, I started to find out (as people were beginning to come forward to tell me what you had been doing) about four different people you had recently slept with behind my back. And for the first time, I had solid

evidence. There was no disputing it anymore. The first one was your next-door neighbour, Neal. Bringing me home in a taxi one night was his dad, Ernie Painter. Ernie told me that Neal had been dating you for the last three weeks. Ernie only told me because he was under the impression that we had both finished months earlier. I told Ernie that impressions can be deceptive and that we were still seeing each other. Ernie could not apologise enough. He was so embarrassed. He said he would not have told me if he knew we were still dating. I told Ernie not to worry, but that he had done me a favour by telling me the truth. On exiting the taxi, Ernie looked at me and said, “Please don’t say anything, Paul.” So I never did tell you. I kept it all a secret.

The second one you cheated on me with was my work colleague from Hatfield. I saw you both at 8 a.m. opposite the hospital, leaving my friend’s house. You drove right past me in your dad’s Allegro with L-plates on it (he was on his bike about sixty seconds in front). I was standing at the bus stop twenty feet away, waiting for my bus to Armthorpe. I think you must have seen me as you drove past. Still, I could not believe what I had just seen. But it was later confirmed by a friend in the Chace that you had been unfaithful — somebody we both knew. This was a serious betrayal of trust by you, Jane. Of the worst kind.

A little footnote to the one above: I could not believe my bad luck. The reason you met my work colleagues in the first place was that, in Doncaster Council’s finest wisdom, they decided to put our council workers’ porta-cabin right outside your house on Park Avenue, Armthorpe, where we worked from for four weeks. I could not believe it. The chances of that happening were millions to one. The first thing I thought was that God must have a great sense of humour. Then I thought maybe there was some synchronicity at work here — maybe the universe wanted us to reconnect. But it turned out not to be the case, as you met my work colleague as a result of our team’s relocation. And then, on one day when I was off work poorly, you gave him your phone number. And later that week you slept with him. As if I needed more evidence that you were unfaithful.

I often think, even today, so many years later: why did my first love have to be such a bad apple? Why me? Maybe God was preparing me for the rest of my life. However, even though it was all very bad for me at the time, in the long run it would be much worse for you. No one wants to date or marry a woman who betrays and lies to everyone, and who is unfaithful to her partner. I suspect that over the years you have, at times, lived in Hell for the way you betray and treat people. I doubt I was the only one.

The third one was when we left the Chace one night rather tipsy. You left me alone to go home with two lads who lived on Ingram Road, Dunscroft, and you stayed there all night. I later found out what you let them do. It was sickening. Disgusting.

Fast-forward a couple of years: Rotter’s Night Club. The last day it was open. You bumped into my best friend at the time — Steven. Remember?

The conversation quickly turned to me, as you were asking how I was doing. Steven told you that I was studying music. I later got accepted at Oxford, where I studied Marxism and Economics before completing an HND in Social Sciences.

Steven went on to ask if you still loved me. You studied for a while and then replied, “I still feel something for Paul.” “Does Paul still hate me?” you said. Steven told me he said yes; he hates you for what you did to him. You then said, “It should be me who hates Paul.” But then you said something that was so untrue and somewhat delusional. You said, “Tell Paul that I was always faithful to him.”

Standing next to Steven was someone else you had slept with behind my back when we were dating — Ken. Steven asked you what had been going on between you and him. You looked at Ken and said, “Shut up. Don’t say anything.” Steven came to my house the day after and told me everything, Jane. Ken and one of his friends sometime later spilled the beans. You had been sleeping with him too. I was repulsed, to say the least. But I already suspected it, as my Nana, who lived opposite Ken, had seen you going into his house one day and told my mother.

Me and Steven could not understand why you would sleep with Ken. He was the ugliest kid at school, and that did not change much later in life. He was the community tramp, bless him. He could not get a decent girlfriend ever. You really degraded yourself there, Jane. But that was at least four. At least four sets of people you were unfaithful with. You are probably reading this thinking Paul did not know the half of it — and probably never will. Yes, that was true back in the day; but please note that I had factored all that in when I eventually made the decision to leave. To walk away for good.

As for telling Steven to tell me that you were always faithful to me — that could not be further from the truth. You were the complete opposite of faithful, Jane. Totally disloyal, deceitful, dishonest, and unfaithful. It still beggars belief how many people you slept with behind my back. You made it look as though you were offering yourself to anyone who showed the slightest interest. You were beginning to look like some kind of community project, where anyone could have a go: In other words, you were sleeping with anyone and everyone. You really did get that bad. By any reasonable definition Jane, you had well and truly become a **Whore** *(Son-of-Perdition)* And there was no doubt about it back then.

Maybe I missed out on a business opportunity. Maybe I could have been your Pimp — and instead of you giving yourself away freely to anyone who asked, we could have charged them instead. If only. Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

But at the end of the day, maybe I was too trusting, too naïve, too open, or simply too honest to be with you. I should have recognised the red flags that now seem all too obvious. What you practised was a monumental betrayal of trust. And now, reading this, Jane, I hope you can at least be

truthful with yourself and say sorry — not to me, because it is far too late — but to yourself, for what you did.

Anyway, three days after Steven passed all the above on to me, I phoned you — but your dad picked up, so I put the phone down without saying anything. Common sense prevailed. But I was not angry with you, Jane. I was more concerned about you still having to lie about everything. You lived in some sort of delusional world of your own, an abstract reality that bore no resemblance to the real world — the one the rest of us have to live in. If you had simply said to Steven, “Tell Paul that I am sorry,” I would probably have shed a tear or two, and then said thank you to you in my prayers, with a smile.

However, I needed to get a message to you. So I phoned Susan. She picked up straight away and was initially happy to hear from me. But when I asked her if she could pass a message on to you, she went absolutely bananas. Totally ape. She said that you had stolen me from her, and that I left her for you. She was so angry I thought, Oh my God, what have I done? I said to Susan, “Calm down — we only dated for a week. I think I kissed you only ten times.” She went completely mental with both of us, saying she had never forgotten what we did to her. Eventually she calmed down.

I then bumped into her in Camelot’s a year later. She was fine. So happy. She said she loved my aftershave. I think she had forgotten all about the phone call. Thank God.

In the end, you were not the kind of girlfriend worth investing in anymore. You had become a liability and a severe embarrassment to me, Jane. Your behaviour was shocking — deceitful, dishonest, and unfaithful to a degree I still struggle to comprehend today. And I will never know why. Maybe it was all a test sent to me by God himself. I’ve had other things test me too — people saying untruthful and false things about me behind the scenes. All unofficial, of course. Never a knock on the door or a letter in the post, yet they still print things about you that are completely untrue. It’s called being cancelled — Kafkaesque. And there is nothing you can do about it. The financial cost is too high. So you walk away knowing how corrupt people and institutions are. It only ends when you die. Do not believe everything you read.

Fast-forward another year. Whose taxi did I jump into coming home? Yes — Ernie’s again. By this time, me and Ernie were good friends, lol. He was such a great guy. I really liked him. Anyway, Ernie started to tell me that you were on the verge of divorce with your husband. He said you were both arguing all the time and the relationship looked over and done. However, he said that you had just fallen pregnant three weeks earlier for the first time (I told Ernie it was the second time) He said that might bring you both closer together for the baby’s sake. I hope it did, Jane.

But I did feel for your husband, wondering if he was going through what I had to go through — all the lies, the sleeping around, the deception, the dishonesty. Maybe he got smart too and moved on, just like I did. I do not

know. All I know is that I made a decision that maybe saved my life. I escaped Hell, but by the narrowest of margins.

I found out later in my life that it's about knowing when to let go, and stopping yourself from letting how much you care dictate what you can tolerate. See, I didn't walk away because I didn't care. I walked away because it was you who didn't care. And that was what I refused to tolerate any more. I kept trying to fix things — problems you had created. I was trapped between loving you and some kind of emotional slavery. All of this I had to deal with alone, because you wouldn't talk to me about anything. All I got was silence whenever I asked you to talk. You used silence to avoid answering questions, knowing you would lose the argument. You did it all the time.

But eventually you ran out of time. So I did something you thought I would not — or could not — do. I walked away, and I have never spoken to you since.

In the final weeks before I left you, you started to treat me so badly. Unfaithful, dishonest, deceitful, and just cruel. You also became angry, aggressive, and violent. I remember you attacking me in that nightclub, hitting me in the face before Neal pulled you away. Then, as I was trying to leave, you were waiting for me. I couldn't even escape, lol. It was crazy. Then you followed me outside after I got thrown out. I wish you had just stayed in the nightclub, Jane, because I then hit you. I will regret that for the rest of my life. I am so sorry. I really am.

And then, to make matters worse, you decided to press charges against me. I got a £100 fine, which was the bare minimum they could give me. My solicitor told me that if I wanted to press charges against you, I could — and that your fine would have been much higher than mine because you started the entire fight. But why would I want to do that to my girlfriend?

That has stayed on my DBS forever. As you know, I work in social work (care management), so every time I start a new locum CM post somewhere, I have to — if asked at interview — talk about that £100 fine. From Edinburgh to Dorset, they all know about Miss Jane Thompson, lol. I told them all about you. You're famous. Very famous. See — I can't escape you. You follow me to every interview, lol. It's so funny.

Then of course there was that day I was coming home from work. As I walked down Broadway, there you were, waiting to ambush me with Nick. You just wanted to fight. You were furious — but why? I told you it was over, that we were not dating anymore, and that you could do whatever you wanted because I no longer cared. At that point you went to hit me again, but Nick pulled you away just in time. Nick told me a few days later that you had said you would let him sleep with you if he beat me up. You later admitted it. You usually lied to me, but on this occasion you said yes, you did.

But what I remember most about that encounter was this: as I turned and walked away from you, just after you had tried to hit me, and being no more than five yards away, you shouted at me with such sheer hatred, venom, and anger that everyone in the street could hear you. It was like you were possessed by the Devil himself. In the two years we were together — in the two years we were lovers — I had never seen that side of you. Not ever.

Maybe it was because you could see me slowly starting to move away from you. Slowly disengaging before the big walk. And for the first time ever, you were no longer in control of the narrative. You were no longer in control of the relationship. I was. Maybe that is where your anger and violence came from — knowing you were losing control of me, knowing that I was slowly but surely leaving you.

But that encounter helped me come to the pivotal decision I made later on: that it was time to end this farce and walk away. And walk away for good.

About eight weeks after I finally left you, strange things started to happen. You began to realise that I had really left you, and you went into panic mode. I could not believe it. I was watching and getting feedback from a variety of people. Several told me that you were coming to the Chace — miles away from where you lived — with some lads in a yellow car, asking for me. One friend said you tapped him on the shoulder and asked, “Where is Paul?” I saw him the day after outside the local shop. He told me all about it. You were also seen in the Abbey looking for me.

Of course, I now know why. I’ve studied some psychology of relationship breakdown over the years, and I now understand what was happening to you — what was going through your head at that time. The basic pattern: shock, denial, panic, and self-doubt. You were thrown into turmoil by something you never expected would ever happen to you — me leaving you. Walking away. Turning myself into a ghost. Never to be seen again.

Because I had walked away from you in absolute silence, the void and absence I created drove you spare. My silence and disappearing act were the loudest signals you had ever received from me in the two years we were together. But your reaction — trying to reconnect with me — was a real surprise. I never expected that. I thought you would just let me go, but you didn’t. Instead, you came after me. Trying to find me. Asking around. Writing letters. Trying to get me back. Why? Did you honestly think I would never find out about your monumental acts of betrayal? That people wouldn’t tell me what you had been doing to destroy our relationship? It wasn’t a stranger who inflicted betrayal, dishonesty, and deceit upon me. It was someone who once claimed to have loved me. You.

The level of dishonesty, deception, and pain you inflicted on me — not just once, but many times over the two years we were together — was so frequent that it would be difficult to keep count now. The four I listed above are just the ones I had solid evidence for, but there were several more I was partially aware of. You were unfaithful so many times. It was

as though your moral compass had long since broken. To describe your behaviour as pathological would be an understatement. You really had become my own personal ***Gethsemane***. And the Tenth Ring of Hell.

And did you think all of this would be forgotten with the passage of time? That no one else around you would ever notice? Think again. Many noticed. Many. It is fair to say that some wounds cut so deeply and so painfully that they can never be erased by any passage of time. And of course I would eventually find out about your acts of betrayal. Of course. It goes without saying, Jane. Right?

So, alongside the shock, denial, panic, and self-doubt, was it confusion, regret, anger, or love that drove you to come looking for me? Difficult to say what you were thinking and feeling back then. I was also told you looked on edge in the Chace. Whether you were coming there to cause trouble with me, trying to win some emotional tug-of-war, or wanting to say sorry and make up — I do not know.

Thinking back though, and knowing what I know today, it was highly likely that you were looking for closure from me. Looking to have one last massive argument. One last moment of chaos, so you could lie about everything and then walk away in peace. But I refused to give you closure. I refused to give you chaos, and I refused to give you peace. Instead, I gave you silence and absence — and it drove you spare. It drove you crazy because I had left you with no one to argue with and no one to attack. I had simply disappeared into the *void*. Never to be found. Gone.

Prof. Jordan Peterson would have been proud of me. And I was only nineteen.

Either way, I changed all my social habits and movements for nearly six months to avoid you — including not shopping around town on Saturdays. You never thought in a million years I had the mental strength and confidence to do that. Yet again, you made a major miscalculation, Jane. Sometimes it is better to face the truth: that you might be better off alone.

Maybe that was the same time you posted that letter to me — the one I have now. It would not have made any difference, Jane. The letter only specifies a time and date, and nothing else except “come alone.” If, on the other hand, you had written me a letter saying that you were sorry for everything and that you wanted to start again — that you wanted to meet to talk and sort things out — and if you had had the courage to write it yourself and sign it yourself, instead of getting Lisa to do it, then maybe I would have. I might have turned up to talk. I just don’t know. I will never know.

You were also seen standing in a shop doorway at 11 a.m. on a Saturday morning, waiting near my bank for me. I used to meet you there some weeks to draw out my wages — same time every week. However, that job had ended weeks earlier, so I had no reason to go into town anymore. Otherwise, you would have seen me. Would it have changed anything

though? As throughout this letter, probably not. Your personality traits of dishonesty, deceit, and unfaithfulness were hard-wired into your DNA, Jane. There was no changing you. That is why I walked away and never looked back. And we have never talked since.

One thing I never understood at the time was this: why would you hate me, Jane? Why would you say to Steven that “it should be me who hates Paul”? I was totally faithful to you. During the two years we were together, I never slept with anyone else — that was absolutely true. You were my life. But look how you treated me. Even after studying psychology and relationship breakdown for many years after I left you, I am still at a loss as to why you were so unfaithful, and why you always came back to me telling me that you loved me.

However, looking back now, I think I understand why you said it should be you who hates me. The answer is quite simple. When I walked away from you into the abyss — into total silence and absence — giving you no one to argue with and no one to attack, I simply took back my dignity and peace. It was an act of self-preservation. And the silence I gave you was my emotional closure.

I now know, many years later, that this can cause severe psychological pain for the one left behind — namely you. It creates confusion, anger, and distress. You start asking yourself: Why is Paul not validating me anymore? Why is he not chasing me? Why is he not following the script? What did I do to make him leave? And with me denying you any chance of closure or communication, all of that would have driven you spare. Driven you crazy.

The thousands of psychology books gathering dust on library shelves around the world mostly document the same endings. The confusion caused by someone detaching and walking away can lead to one of two paths.

One path is that you sit down and think — really think — and go through a period of deep introspection. From that comes growth, understanding, and humility. You ask yourself what went wrong. Why did Paul leave me? And if I am honest with him, would he ever come back? If you had taken this route, Jane, you would have found the answers. They were right in front of you the whole time.

But you didn’t take this route. Your ego wouldn’t let you. So you stayed stuck in your world of lies and deceit, unwilling to admit to yourself what you had done that caused me to leave. To walk away. So you took the second route instead — the one governed by ego. You built a wall of *armour-plated denial* that kept you from seeing the truth of your actions: the betrayals, the dishonesty, the repeated disloyalty. This route is like a house of cards in a storm. Eventually it all comes crashing down. And then you are left with the cold reality of your own deceptions — betrayal after betrayal. I did not inflict that pain upon you, Jane. You did it to yourself, and in spectacular fashion.

And it is well documented that taking the second route often manifests itselfe (especially when there is emotional immaturity) as anger, aggression and violence. This was you, to the last letter and full stop. And it is probably the reason why you wanted to hate me.

But we both know now that over the years, you have had plenty of time to sit in front of the mirror. And at times, with your ego taking a back seat, you slowly started to discover that it was yourself — and only ever yourself — that you needed to hate. It was never me, Jane. It never was.

One last thing, Jane, before I go. Could you please do something for us both — for all three of us. Please could you pray for that child we lost. For our baby we let pass away. For the infant we never gave a chance to live. What we did; and especially what you did was so bad and so wrong. I hope you know that now. An unborn child has only two people who can fight for its right to live: its mother and father. You and me. I remember asking you at the time if we could keep our baby, but you said no and refused to have any debate. You seemed so cold and distant, showing little or no emotion regarding the decision you had made to end our child's life. I wonder if you ever think about it today, and whether you believe you made a terrible mistake. I wonder. All I know is that if that baby was 50% you and 50% me, then it may well have been the most beautiful and cutest child in the whole world. I have no doubt about that. None.

I would never entirely blame you though, Jane. I also take much responsibility for that child's life and what happened. I should have been far more assertive with both of us to keep him or her. I could have raised the baby myself. My family would have supported me. I will never live that down. If only there were a grave where we could take flowers and pray. If only there were a headstone with a name upon it. I think about it so often now, in a way I never used to. It is like I am being punished for ending that child's life. If he or she were alive today, they would be 42. Maybe lighting up the world; touching people's hearts. If the baby had been born a girl, then I already know her name. It would be *Charlotte*. You used to love that name. You told me so many times on the bus going home. The older I get, the worse the pain is. I pray all the time now for that unborn child's soul. I pray for us both to be forgiven. You need to pray too, Jane. It could help so much.

Receiving your letter from all those years ago has been a shock for me. You reading this letter has probably been a shock for you too. I thought about writing back for months, but it seemed totally mental. But it felt like someone, or something, wanted me to write back to explain what happened back then. It was like I was being given an opportunity for atonement. But why? Do I not have long left to live? In the end I thought, OMG, just write back. After all, you never did know exactly why I left you. You had no idea that I knew all of the above — about how many times you had been unfaithful to me (unless Ernie told you, and I don't think he did). So how could you know? I did not even tell my mother. I kept it all to myself. So now you know. You know it all. Why I left you. Why I walked away.

I will say *goodbye* now, Jane. I really do wish you well, and I truly mean that. You were an enormous part of my life back then, and I hope you can still say the same about me. We both have lots of good memories, but some bad ones too. However, life is very, very short. I am 60 (a very young one though), and you are 60 in December. Whatever years we have left, I hope they can be filled with happiness and prosperity for both of us. I will pray for you and your family. Please look after yourself, Jane. And thanks for the letter — albeit a little late.

Forty-one years too late.

Paul XX

P.S. I thought about giving you my email address, Jane, just in case you wanted to respond. But I don't want to argue with you. I really don't. If I thought you had changed and could be civil and honest, then talking would be great. It really would. But I just don't know if you have made that change over the years. I can't take the chance. Plus, you may have family dynamics that make it difficult for you. I understand.

Acknowledgements

Between visiting the disused library where I live and the chapel where I go to pray, it was as if a seed had been planted in my mind to share this story. Not just as a planned letter of reply, but now as a *short-story*. It felt as though something else was writing it for me. The words and explanations just kept flowing, page after page. It truly feels like an act of atonement for me, especially regarding our unborn child — the one we abandoned, the one we never gave a chance to live. I hope we can both be forgiven for what we did back then. If I could take back time for that one event in my life and change it, I would. I am so sorry. I really am.

So the words and pages just kept writing themselves. To what cost, I do not yet know. Mentioning the name Jane is like an actor mentioning the name Macbeth — tragedy and betrayal are soon to follow. So, Jane, if you are reading this, please go easy on me. Please.

The following authors and their writings helped me so much by having the courage and confidence to put pen to paper and complete this short story. Without them, there would only be silence. I am so grateful.

1) My greatest inspiration for writing this Short-Story, was the great author and existentialist writer Fyodor Dostoevsky and his book “Notes from the Underground”.
2) Professor Jordan Peterson’s great work “12 Rules for Life. An Antidote for Chaos” & “Beyond Order”.
3) And Yeonmi Park’s books “In Order to Live” & “While Time Remains”. A North Korean defector’s search for freedom.

In The End It Was Worth All The Tears. And There Were Many
I Thank You All So Much
God Bless You All

Paul: Aged 20 (1985)

Jane Thompson Stories @ Booksie.com

Jane Thompson Stories @ Short Story Lovers.com

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